Government of Saskatchewan

Annual Report 1989-90

91-04501/

Northern Affairs Secretariat

For the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1990

Minister
Honourable Lorne Kopelchuk

Secretary
Lorne Koback

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Honourable Lorne Kopelchuk
Minister Responsible for the
Northern Affairs Secretariat

Minister's Letter of Transmittal

Honourable Sylvia Fedoruk
Lieutenant Governor of the
Province of Saskatchewan

Madam:

I have the honour to submit the annual report of the Saskatchewan Northern Affairs Secretariat for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1990.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorne Kopelchuk
Minister of the
Northern Affairs Secretariat

Lorne Koback, Secretary
Northern Affairs Secretariat

Secretary's Letter of Transmittal

Honourable Lorne Kopelchuk
Minister of the Northern
Affairs Secretariat

Sir:

I am pleased to present to you the annual report of the Northern Affairs Secretariat for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1990.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorne Koback
Secretary

Message From the Secretary

The Northern Affairs Secretariat carries out a mix of northern program delivery and consultative responsibilities. In the year under review Secretariat staff administered a special northern federal-provincial economic development agreement, and coordinated crown land surface lease agreements necessary for northern mineral production. The staff were also active on a host of other fronts, helping northerners to assess their prospects and opportunities for development, and to work toward setting their own agenda for the future.

The year saw continued development based on a truly historic, amicable settlement of grievances between the Province and Cumberland House, involving transferring to the community and the local Indian Band significant land, resources and development authority. From this, the Province's oldest settlement, we hope to learn some new lessons about cooperative and mutually beneficial northern development.

Great strides were made during the year, by northerners, to rebuild and strengthen northern regional government. Recognizing the provincial role of SUMA, but also recognizing significant differences in northern social, economic and local governance circumstances, efforts continued to develop a structure that will allow northerners more meaningful input to provincial policy makers and program planners.

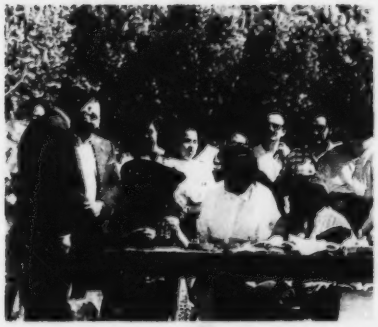
Throughout the year situations unfolded where northerners were seen reaching out, beyond their communities and beyond Saskatchewan borders in some cases. Gary Tinker's courageous walk on crutches from LaRonge to Regina to create an awareness of the northern disabled will not soon be forgotten. In other cases northern representatives investigated nuclear facilities, pulp mills and industrial plants in other provinces to help themselves develop informed opinions, and to enter meaningfully into debate about similar proposals and possibilities in northern Saskatchewan.

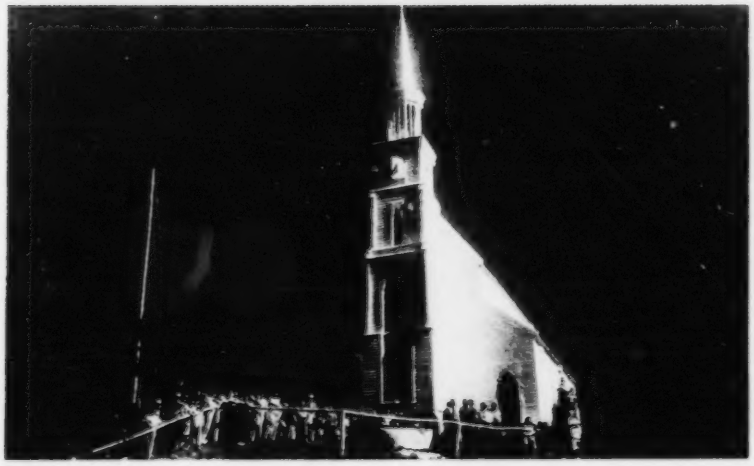
It is with great pleasure that the Secretariat looks forward to the good will and enthusiasm of other government agencies, and particularly the people of northern Saskatchewan, as these challenges continue into the 1990's.

Northerners Host Royalty

Northerners from the La Ronge Indian Band, Air Ronge, La Ronge and Stanley Mission had a rare opportunity in mid July to host royalty when the Duke and Duchess of York spent three of their five day official visit to Saskatchewan relaxing in the La Ronge area.

While respecting the couple's privacy and quiet time at an island cabin, local residents also took pride in providing some fine northern hospitality, including gifts of traditional northern crafts, and a community feast at Stanley Mission.





1989 - 1990 The Year in Review

April

NORTEP (Northern Teacher Education Program) Council announced the New NORTEP, a program of expanded opportunity for higher education in the north. The main purpose is to give students a solid grounding in university studies enabling them to feel at home in a campus program. On the teacher training side, programs were expanded to graduate middle-years and high-school teachers.

May

The Athabasca transmission line was officially commissioned with ceremonies in Stony Rapids, Black Lake, Uranium City, Camsell Portage, Wollaston and Fond du Lac. The 155 kilovolt line was completed in October 1988 and, at 355 kilometres in length, is Sask Power's longest transmission line. The project means lower electrical costs for northerners and increased potential for the development of the area's natural resources.

June

The Sask Power Northern Enterprise Fund, established to provide financial assistance for northern business development, held its first meeting in La Ronge. Annual budgets of about $1 Million are to be derived from power production at northern hydro-electric stations. Managing this first ever revenue sharing fund is a ten person Board of Directors, nine of whom are northerners.

July

The beginning of the month saw the last bald eagle capture in northern Saskatchewan for shipment to Pennsylvania. It marks the end of a seven year Canada - U.S. effort to increase the bald eagle population in the state, where only five breeding pairs of this national emblem were detected in 1982. Saskatchewan's population of 1300 breeding pairs has remained stable throughout the capture program.

August

Gary Tinker, a disabled northern resident, took his first step on a courageous 650km trek from La Ronge to Regina, on crutches. Successfully completed in October, Gary's walk achieved its dual objectives of raising awareness of the north's disabled, and showing that a disability need not be a handicap.

September

Reports of a world class gold find at Contact Lake in La Ronge Provincial Park were treated cautiously by joint owners Cameco, Uranerz and Windarra Minerals. At the same time park users, government officials and local residents began to debate whether mining should take place in the Park at all, and if so under what conditions.

October

Saskatchewan's first Indian-controlled insurance brokerage firm, First Nations General Insurance Inc., was formed as a result of a joint venture between the Lac La Ronge Band's Kitsaki Development Corporation and a Regina firm. The company will provide insurance services to Indian-owned businesses and bands.

November

Cameco, the world's largest integrated uranium producer, announced an accidental spill of two million litres of contaminated water at its Rabbit Lake mine site. Although later investigation showed the spill to have no long term hazardous effects, government agencies and local residents put plans in place to increase industry safety.

December

The final report of the Task Force on Northern Education was presented to Education Minister Ray Meiklejohn. The task force was successful in fulfilling its objective to involve northerners in charting a new course for education in northern Saskatchewan.

January

The Athabasca Training Council, involving far northern community and Indian Band representatives, announced funding for a three year, innovative pilot project aimed at training local residents for work at northern mines. Sponsored by Saskatchewan Education, Employment and Immigration Canada and industry, 45 residents of the Athabasca area will soon begin a combined work-study program.

February

Millar-Western, an Edmonton based forestry company, announced it will build a pollution-free pulp mill in northern Saskatchewan. The $360 Million mill at Meadow Lake will be the first of its kind in the world and the first zero-effluent pulp mill in North America. The pulp mill will enhance operations of the NorSask sawmill at Meadow Lake, jointly owned by an employee group and the Meadow Lake Tribal Council.

March

The Ile a la Crosse farm, one of several northern farms developed by the government to provide northern agricultural training and employment opportunities, was transferred to local ownership. Although previously an integrated cow-calf operation, initial community plans are to make the 1850 acre property available for subdivision by private, community based interests.

1989 - 1990 Achievements

Northern Economic Development Subsidiary Agreement (NEDSA)

Secretariat staff administered the provincial side of this five year Canada/Saskatchewan agreement, aimed broadly at enhancing northern business and employment opportunities. Final payments under the agreement coincided with the end of the fiscal year.

During NEDSA's lifespan over 300 projects were approved in locations across northern Saskatchewan, resulting in federal and provincial financial commitments of over $30 Million. Major provincial contributions came from the Departments of Education, Tourism and Small Business, Agriculture and Social Services, and enabled the capture of matching federal funds.

Training and education were important agreement thrusts, accounting for 30% of all project approvals and almost 40% of total funding. Local capacity building was also an important initiative. Twenty one northern Indian Bands completed economic development planning studies, and twenty two northern communities participated in regional development planning associations, with significant NEDSA funding.

In summary, the NEDSA proved to be a highly flexible financial assistance program, quick to react to the needs and priorities of northerners.

Mineral Surface Lease Agreements

Secretariat staff coordinate the negotiation of surface lease agreements with northern mineral developers on behalf of government. A variety of regulatory and developmental agencies contribute to the final production of each Agreement, ensuring that development proceeds in a manner sensitive to the needs of government, industry and the public interest.

In the year under review, rental fees from mineral Surface Leases amounted to over $800,000. In addition, operating mines spend about $14 million annually on the purchase of goods and services from northern businesses. About 300 northern residents employed at these same mines earn in excess of $11 million in direct wages.

Continued growth of the mineral industry promises to be an important factor in northern development. Expansion in uranium, gold and base metal production will contribute to a busy year ahead.

Annual Northern Ministers' Conference

Each year ministers responsible for development of Canada's two northern territories and seven provinces with distinct northern jurisdictions meet to deal with issues of mutual concern. This year's conference was hosted by Quebec, and was attended by the Secretariat.

Three major topics of mutual concern evolved from the conference: the expiry of federal participation in northern regional development agreements; loss of northern tax benefits as proposed in the federal Brunelle report; and, northern impact of the proposed federal Goods and Services Tax.

Working committees were established to deal with each of these topics, and to report their findings at next year's conference, hosted by northern Ontario.

Transportation and Utilities

Commitments were made in the year under review for further construction of the new road link between La Loche and Black Point that will see the extension of all-weather transportation available as far as Garson Lake. The Secretariat's inter-agency coordination of this joint construction, training, employment and economic development initiative has as its long term goal a permanent connection to Fort McMurray, Alberta.

In the far north, Athabasca Bands ran a pilot project freighting goods overland from the terminus of Hwy #905 to Black Lake, using the new Sask Power hydro transmission line right of way. Secretariat staff coordinated regulatory approval, and will monitor the success of this initiative to improve access to seasonally isolated communities.

The Athabasca hydro-transmission line was officially commissioned in late May, 1989, providing economical power to communities in the far north. At the same time, centre line cutting began on a new line that will link the Island Falls plant at Sandy Bay to Points North at the end of Hwy #905. Secretariat staff coordinated training opportunities for northern contractors and labourers expecting significant employment opportunities to arise as a result of this $70 million project.

Cumberland House Settlement and Development Agreements

Having coordinated a multi-party conciliation process leading to the signing of these Agreements in 1988-89, the Secretariat continued to represent the Provincial Government on the Board of Directors of the Cumberland House Development Corporation in the year under review. The Corporation, established by the 10-year Development Agreement, is responsible for planning and implementing social and economic development projects and activites that will provide immediate and long-term benefits to local residents, using capital assets, land and funding made available through the amicable settlement of grievances.

Northwest Saskatchewan Municipalities' Association

In support of strengthened, more effective and mutually beneficial partnerships amongst governments, industries and northern communities in project and services' planning and delivery in the north, the Secretariat provided ongoing consultation and support to both individual communities and regional associations, including the Northwest Saskatchewan Municipalities' Association (NWSMA).

Beyond organizational and core operations' funding provided through the Northern Economic Development Subsidiary Agreement, the Secretariat assisted the NWSMA in establishing critical linkages with key industries in the north to discuss enhanced employment and business opportunities for northerners. The Secretariat also continued to coordinate discussions with senior government departments regarding innovative programming changes that would afford residents greater involvement in development decision-making affecting their region.

Northern Development Opportunities' Investigations

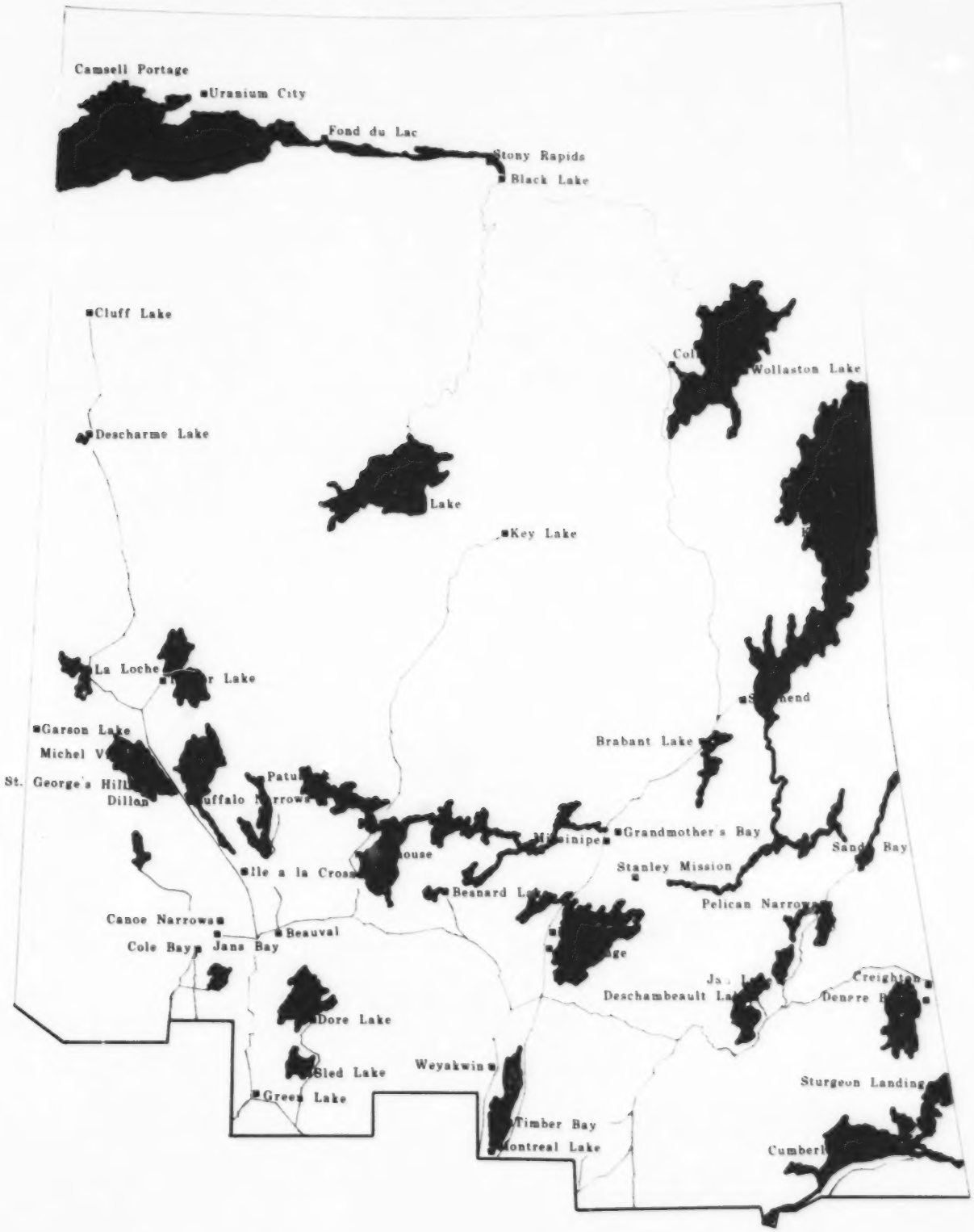
In keeping with Government's general responsibilities to increase awareness and foster informed discussion of issues and opportunities, the Secretariat was able to respond to Northerners' requests for assistance on a number of occassions in 1989-90.

Beyond local workshops and information sessions organized by the Secretariat to provide opportunities to discuss new ideas and approaches on development with participants from outside the Province, northern community leaders also participated in several fact finding missions coordinated and cost-shared by Northern Affairs.

Visiting such centres as Hay River, NWT, Swan Hills and Whitecourt, Alberta, Pinawa, Manitoba, and Chapleau, Sudbury and the Wikwemikong Indian Reserve in northern Ontario, northerners brought home for discussion first hand information and perspectives on a wide variety of projects, programs and services which have potential for our north. Topics included:

- Community greenhouse operations,
- Hazardous waste treatment facilities,
- a CTM pulp mill and state of the art sawmilling operation,
- SLOW POKE energy and nuclear waste management systems,
- cogeneration technology,
- a regional heritage tourism initiative, and
- a "microloans" financing program

Work continued through year end to assess applicablity to northern Saskatchewan.


Camsell Portage
Uranium City
Fond du Lac
Stony Rapids
Black Lake
Cluff Lake
Wollaston Lake
Descharme Lake
Lake
Key Lake
La Loche
Garson Lake
Brabant Lake
St. George's Hill
Dillon
Grandmother's Bay
Stanley Mission
Pelican Narrows
Canoe Narrows
Beauval
Cole Bay
Jans Bay
Dore Lake
Sled Lake
Weyakwin
Green Lake
Timber Bay
Montreal Lake
Sturgeon Landing